



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 10

MARCH 20, 2015

## Pages Learn About Legislature



### Pages Write Bills, Hold Mock Hearings



During the first three days of their week, pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. Criteria for writing a good bill was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates to formulate official-looking bills in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Pages also wrote media releases for their bills which are included in this newsletter.

Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. Each bill was voted upon resulting in a “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation that determines whether the bill continues on in the legislative process. Because pages are in the Page School for only two hours a day for one week, there is not sufficient time to fully develop the final versions of their bills. However, the process of writing and presenting their own bills provides an excellent exposure to the real legislative process.

### Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool> This newsletter has been posted there.

### Don't Give Inmates the Easy Way Out, Eliminate the Death Penalty

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Jasmine Ward, Asia Tanis, and Kyle Yoo introduced Senate Bill 5324, which addresses the issue of the death penalty. The bill to eliminate the death penalty will be effective, because it will reduce government spending for executions which will increase funding in other areas, such as criminal prevention. It will forestall wrongful convictions which takes an emotional toll on the convict and their family. Recent studies from Seattle University show “The death penalty cases in the state cost \$1 million more than similar Washington cases where capital punishment is not sought,” said Senator Yoo. The 1 million spent doesn't include the amount spent on their housing in maximum security prisons. This bill focuses on reducing extraneous tax dollar spending while giving the public emotional closure. It also increases the opportunity to raise money in other areas that will improve the state's condition.

Regala, the sister-in-law of a victim of a homicide case, said “It's still painful and hard for me to talk about because the hurt never goes away, but executing that person doesn't solve the problem.”



### School Start Times? Where do I Start!



Olympia – House Bill 1492 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Cameron Sandison, Ozi Goldstein, and Brandon Dille. “This

bill addresses the issue of school starting times. The bill will improve the health and learning ability of many teenagers,” said Rep. Goldstein. Studies show that teenagers usually do not feel tired or have the ability to fall asleep before 11 o’clock at night, because of how their bodies are developing. This makes it hard for them to get up early to go to middle or high school which usually start between 7 and 8 o’clock that only gives them about seven hours of sleep. This bill would make it so middle and high schools start later giving teenagers more sleep and improving their school experience. The new schedule will have elementary schools start between 7:25 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., middle schools will start between 7:55 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., and high schools will start between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m.

### Lawmakers “Bag” Plastic Bags

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Henry Kombol and Myra Kalich introduced Senate Bill 5678 which addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution. The Legislature will ban all plastic bags in stores. “This bill is a good one because it will reduce pollution

caused by plastic bag toxins and oils and their effect on marine life and the environment,” said Sen. Kombol. Plastic bags have been causing problems in the oceans and landfills for too long. Since they don’t decompose fast at all, they end



up staying in the dumps and floating in oceans. The alternative to plastic bags would be paper or reusable bags that give off less pollutants and decompose at a much faster rate. In order cover the cost of these paper bags, a 5 cent fee will be put in place for buying a paper bag. You can still bring your own reusable bags. By doing this we will keep the plastic bags out of landfills and our marine life which will be better for everybody.

### Washington Senators Put a Foot Down on Drunk Driving

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Sarah Hull and Devin Gombosky introduced Senate Bill 7999 which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will bring drunk driving fatality rates down in a drastic manner,” said Sen. Hull. Bill 7999 will require alcohol related DUI offenders to purchase a special red



license plate that labels them as such. After two years of a clean slate with no related offences, the offender is permitted to remove the plate and replace it with a generic one. The issue is set to substantially reduce the amount of drunk driving occurrences in Washington State.

### Why Go to Jail for Borrowing a Family Friend’s Firearm

Olympia – House Bill 1594 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Nathan Eibert and Cameron Eibert. “This bill addresses the issue of gun handling among family and friends.

The bill will allow for the transfer of firearms between friends and family,” said Rep. Eibert. The Legislature will require that such a transfer of guns be legal. The receiver will have had a background check within the last year. Minors who choose to use a firearm will be at the discretion of their parents or legal guardian. This will allow Americans to enjoy and exercise their rights as an American.



**Watch us live at TVW.org**

Search for “Page School” in the Archives to watch yourself in the mock committee hearings.

### Smoking in Vehicles

Olympia – The issue of smoking in cars was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Representatives Ian Forth, Lillian Freeman, and Jakob Wolfe introduced House Bill 2769. “Our bill will ban smoking in vehicles permanently,” said Rep. Lillian Freeman. This will result in fewer accidents on the road and less second hand



smoking for teens and children. These children will have less exposure to the estimated 250 harmful chemicals found in second hand smoke. It is estimated that 1,000 fatal crashes per year were caused by drivers under the influence of smoking tobacco products or marijuana. That’s over a thousand lives that could have been saved just by not lighting up in the car.

### Legislature Seeks to Lower Drinking Age

Olympia – House Bill 1776 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Claire Martin and Casey Mauck. “This bill addresses



the issue of legal drinking age. The bill will change the drinking age to 18 years old,” said Rep. Mauck. “There are far too many deaths related to alcohol poisoning among our youth. We plan to see a decline trend in those numbers eventually which will all

but eliminate the problem,” said Rep. Martin “In Europe where the drinking age varies from 16-18, it has been proven the youth are more responsible with alcohol,” said Rep Mauck.

### State Testing in Schools

Olympia – House Bill 1795 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Justyce Gomez, Ronan Piper, and Delanie Calkins. “This bill addresses the issue of state testing. The bill will make it easier for students to take a school test each quarter instead of taking it at the end of year when students will not remember the information they learned at the beginning of the year,” said Rep. Calkins. As each school year goes on, student test scores

on the MSP, HSPE, and the EOC go down toward the end of the school year because students do not remember what they have learned from the first day of school to the end of the school year. Based on the test results, students may be placed in higher or lower classes again and some students may move up. But while teachers and school boards make decisions based on test scores, it makes it difficult for students who want to go into a higher class for science, math, or language arts. This also makes it hard for students, because they stay up the night before studying for the test. Then the day of the test, they lose paying attention and focus on the test because they didn’t get enough rest the night before the test. Also the tests last a while which makes the students fall asleep during the test. Students tend to speed up taking the test because they are running



out of time, so they rush to get it finished which also decreases their scores. This makes kids upset, because students try so hard to move up in classes instead of staying in a lower class. They also stress out about getting a good grade and graduating high school on time, so they don’t have to repeat their high school year in a grade just because of a score on a test. “This can make them or break them,” said Rep. Gomez and Piper.

### Abolishing the Death Penalty

Olympia – Senate Bill 5999 was introduced yesterday by Senators Chase Smith and Morgan Lane. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty. The bill will abolish the death penalty in Washington State,” said Sen. Smith and Sen. Lane. Bill 5999 will show that the death penalty is not an effective way of



punishment. There is a lot of cost that goes into housing prisoners and the amount of court appeals. The death penalty costs more than \$1 million more than pursuing life in prison without parole. Getting rid of

the death penalty will save money in the state of Washington. Making this change will save the state of Washington millions of dollars and will create a minimum of 250 jobs.

## How Much Does Daylight Savings Time Save You?

Olympia – Senate Bill 6001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Nickolas Berry-Maraist, Alyssa Chichenoff, and Deborah Cobb. “This bill addresses the issue of daylight savings time and whether it should still be implemented in the state of Washington. If passed, the bill will abolish daylight savings time,” said Sen.



Cobb. Studies show that the lack of sleep caused by daylight savings time causes a 6% increase in workplace injuries and 5% increase in heart attacks. DST also increases energy and gasoline consumption. “Daylight savings time is ineffective and dangerous,” said Sen. Berry-Maraist. “It does more harm than good and should no longer be practiced in the State of Washington.”

## Every 48 Seconds a Drunk Driver Makes Somebody Eligible to Park in a Handicap Spot.

Olympia – House Bill 1636 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Talia Spies, Alicia Lungu, and Elizabeth Richards. “This bill addresses the issue of driving under the influence of alcohol. The bill will improve public safety from drunk drivers



by creating license plates that let people know who has been involved in one or more drunken accidents in the last ten years,” said Rep. Alicia Lungu. Our bill is intended to decrease drinking

and driving. Our bill will require anyone convicted of DUI more than once in a ten year span to purchase red license plate for every vehicle they are registered to operate. We want this to help decrease drunken accidents and increase public safety. It will motivate people to get rid of or never have to get red license plates and to abolish driving under the influence.

## Big Ideas in Government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: governing is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day. As they participated in daily discussions and group activities, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding of these concepts deepened. Class activities introduced new vocabulary words, explained legislative procedures, and explored the bill writing process. On Friday, they individually wrote about one of these “big ideas” to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.



## Guest Speakers Visit Page School

This week **Rep. Hans Zeiger (R- 25)**, **House Intern Coordinator Paula Rehwaldt** and **Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles (D-36)** joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about the legislative process or other aspects of government. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker’s questions.



## Page Program Over 125 Years Old

The Legislature’s page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served decades ago. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the House and Senate.



## Competitive Edge Results in *Jeopardy* Win

On Friday, pages tested their knowledge of the legislative process in a spirited game of *Jeopardy*. Winning teams were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.



## Experienced Educators

Sharon Heath is in her second year as the Page School teacher; however, she is definitely not new to the Washington Legislature having worked nearly 20 years for the Legislature’s computer support agency. She has also earned a Master’s in Education and has taught middle school as well as college students.

Leo O’Leary has been teaching and coaching in and around Olympia for the past ten years and is in his fourth session as a Page School teacher. “I really like the fact that I can help kids make their dreams come true through both education and athletics,” he said as he introduced himself on Monday.



## Supreme Court Presentation and Tour

This week the pages had a unique opportunity to hear a presentation about the Supreme Court and to take a tour of the Temple of Justice. This opportunity was designed specifically for the legislative pages. Narda Pierce, Commissioner of the Court, explained the functions of the Supreme Court and the type of cases that are heard. Pages were able to ask questions of interest to them.

Then Cindy Phillips took them on a customized tour of the conference room, robe room, and the law library.

